

THE BOOK CLUB
OF CALIFORNIA
QUARTERLY

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THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA is a cultural center, publisher, and library dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of the book and the book arts, with a particular focus on California and the West. Membership in the Book Club of California is open to all. Annual renewals are due by January 1, but new memberships are accepted throughout the year. Membership dues are: Regular, \$95; Sustaining, \$150; Patron, \$250; Sponsor, \$500; Benefactor, \$1,000, and Student, \$25. All members receive The Book Club of California Quarterly and, except Student members, the annual keepsake. Book Club of California members may pre-order forthcoming club publications at a 10 percent discount. Standing Order Members agree to purchase all Book Club of California publications and receive a 15 percent discount for doing so. All members may purchase extra copies of keepsakes or *Quarterlies* when available. Club publications are made available for purchase by non-members only after pre-publication orders by members have been filled. The Book Club of California is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Portions of membership dues and all donations, whether monetary or in the form of books, are deductible in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code. The Book Club of California's tax-exempt number is 42-2954746. For more information, please call: (415) 781-7532, or toll-free (800) 869-7656. Email: info@bccbooks.org. Website: www.bccbooks.org.

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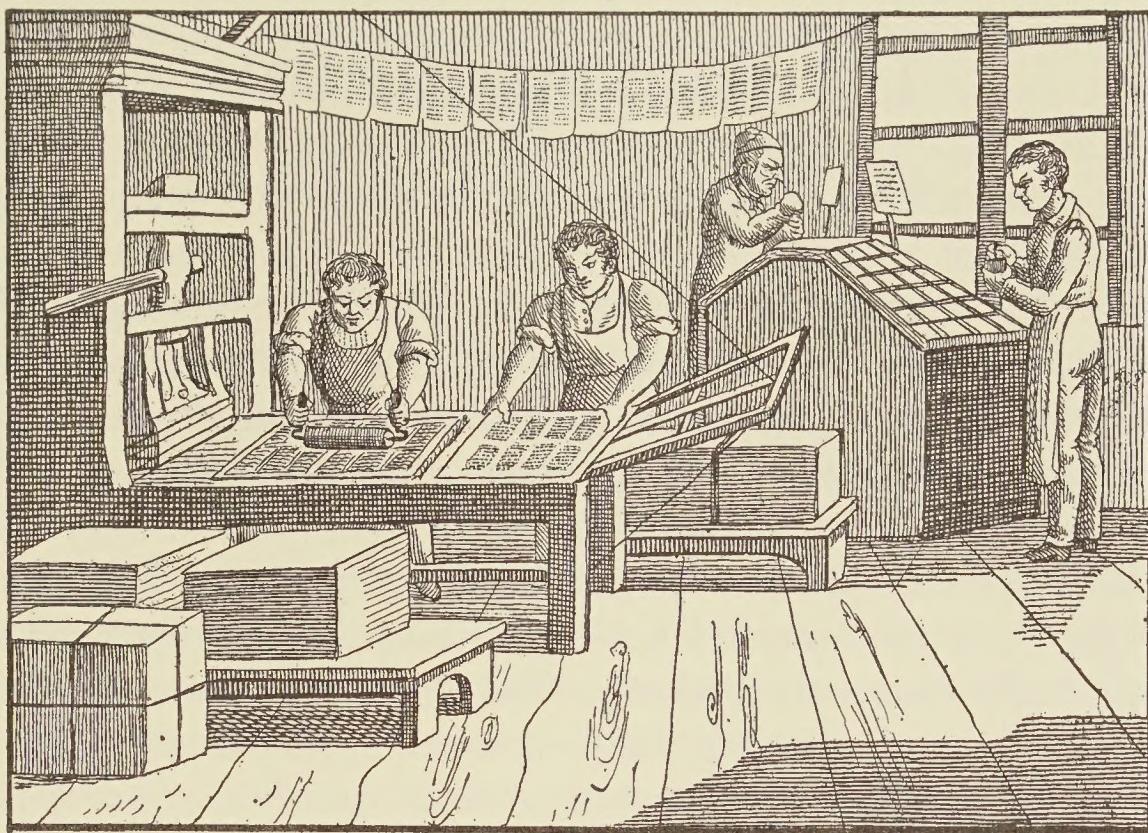
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Editor's Note

We are pleased to announce the inauguration of the *Book Club of California Quarterly* (formerly the *Book Club of California Quarterly News-Letter*). For several years now we have been in discussions with writers, editors, and members of the Publications Committee to make various small and incremental changes to the *Quarterly News-Letter*, primarily the notion of moving gently towards a journal or review, leaving behind the somewhat older vision of a news-letter.

Material changes will be slight, format and pagination will remain the same, and content will, as always, stay firmly rooted in bookish matters. A bibliophile's California remains our primary interest, while significant contributions from beyond the Sierra Nevada are ever welcome additions. Because we may very well be the last quarterly publication of bibliophilic and bibliographic interest to be letterpress printed, we hold a unique position in literary publishing. We hope that you will take note, enjoy the work, and speak well of our efforts to keep the standards as high as we are able.

Over the last few years, since the retirement of Robert (Bob) Chandler as editor-in-chief of the *News-Letter*, we have not had a downtown editor who keeps an eye on the doings on the street and in the clubrooms. Many of us feel the loss, but alas, there is only one Chandler. Thus, we have asked our team, composed of Anne Smith, Yuri Hobart, and Lesya Westerman, to edit and produce a news-sheet that will keep members apprised of club news, member activities, new members, and upcoming events. You will find the first issue enclosed.

The Working Library

BY CLIFFORD BURKE, PRINTER

The exhibition, The Working Library: Clifford Burke and Fine Printing, will be on view at the Book Club of California from March 21 to July 31, 2017. The Working Library will showcase selected works from Cranium Press, founded by Clifford in 1967, as well as books that informed and inspired his distinguished career as poet, printer, and publisher.

There's nothing quite like the atmosphere of a print shop: there is that unique aroma for one thing, that blend of paper, ink, solvents, dusty well-used lead, and well-oiled machinery. There is the visual complexity of the presses, type cases, cutter, and stone. And there is the more or less orderly chaos of projects in the various stages of completion or distribution. Depending on the scale of the shop and its layout, there is either that unmistakable kathunk, clank clank of the platen press, or the monotonous thrum thrum and rumble of the cylinder press, or maybe the quiet meditative erratic crunching of gears and roller motion of the proof press. Even in the olden days of hand press printing, I imagine you'd hear the grunts and groans of the pressman over the click of type in the stick or the tacky swish of ink ball or brayer. The sound of the planer at the stone, a galley sliding out of a rack. I remember how competent I felt when I mastered the art of string: tying up a form and finishing off with that little loop that facilitates untying without pi. And one day Bob Grabhorn taught me how to make those clever figure eights to store that string. There's the pleasure of arranging the puzzle that is the furniture and the forms. It's hard to enjoy all the kinetics unless it's fortunately your own shop and you can enjoy those sensory pleasures as you bring a page of well-made typography to fruition. Whew. Nothing like it. And it was like that from the very beginning.



I don't know a better way to describe how a printer's working library works than to tell the story of how the many elements such a library contains formed the basis of my discoveries and training in the books we made at Cranium Press. Anybody working in the book arts has a library like this, specific to his or her art and craft, and as the Book Club's collection grows, I hope those other stories will be told, as the library comes to serve workers in all aspects of the making of beautiful books.

In the winter of 1962-63 I attended Emerson, a small experimental college in Pacific Grove, founded by the San Franciscan Alvin Duskin and inspired by Paul Goodman's *Community of Scholars*. I was accepted, despite having no money for tuition, because the college had a jumble of a letterpress job shop in the basement, and I had some experience in printing at a rural letterpress newspaper plant the previous summer.

Nothing during my short time at the newspaper had prepared me for the task of learning to print in that chaos. But it was a partial basement, beautifully washed in that marvelous peninsula light, and confusing as it was, it was quiet and solitary, and I found a book there: *The Practice of Printing* by Ralph W. Polk, a high school manual from the days when printing was a trade in the curriculum, like woodworking or welding.

The Practice of Printing was the first volume in what became my Printer's Working Library. Using that book and all those quiet sunny days, I actually managed to bring some order into that little shop, and to print a few small broadsides by some of the other students. It was also there at Emerson, in one of those sun-filled days and rooms, that I discovered what a poem is, an epiphany that has never failed me since. (Well, as my musician daughter says, "I can't always hit it, but I can always hear it.")

A lot of stories are here left untold, like studying the poems of Theodore Roethke with one of my teachers from Emerson, and running a mimeo machine as a peace activist in Berkeley, working with conscientious objectors. But let's fast-forward to June of 1965, when the second book in my working library came to me. I attended one of the last readings at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, that famous gathering of many great poets of the time, where I heard Lew Welch read his poems. That reading reaffirmed my sense of what a poem is, how it works, and what it is supposed to do.

Within a matter of days, I was walking down Telegraph Avenue with the poet and bookman Marty MacClain, me carrying my newly purchased copy of Lew's *On Out*, and we encountered Graham Mackintosh, the printer of that book, and he signed my copy for me. The poet, his printer, and the book they had made together. Thus my future was deeply impressed, like ink.

I'm sure you've noticed by now that this is turning into a library of people. Perhaps I should say gallery. And not entirely a rogues gallery, either. But almost every one of those books that was working away to teach me how to be a printer had a person, or persons, connected to it. And just as the books seemed to miraculously appear when most needed, so did those teachers. I know this process of discovery is not unique. But after all this time, it is still fascinating to me. I hope you all are having as much fun as I did.

Those days I was working at a shop on Bancroft in Berkeley called Fybate Lecture Notes, probably now made totally obsolete, and that wonderful man, the owner, Thomas Winnett, was allowing me to learn to manage the small amount of commercial printing we did along with publishing lecture notes. I was looking at one of those one-line type specimen pamphlets, I remember it being from ATF, and I began looking more and more closely at a line of Caslon 540, and this may sound to you a little like the village idiot: uh, letters; uh, poetry; uh, *Books*. But it was another epiphany that has stayed with me to this day, and despite its failings (more on this later), I use the digital version of ol' 540 wherever I can.

Next, and I don't remember how, I discovered *Books and Printing: A Treasury for Typophiles*, edited by Paul Bennet: forty-two essays on all aspects of the book arts set in twenty-one different typefaces! I can't think of a better way to learn how type works than to look at all those different faces (not all of which are very appealing) set in an identical format, demonstrating such a wide variety of ideas about bookmaking. One of those essays was *The Fine Art of Printing* by Edwin Grabhorn, and even today it inspires me, and gives me hope for a dedication to this craft.

Now I have given you examples of the three elements of the working library, which form a series of threads running throughout a career in this craft, and seem to hold true even now as I struggle with the realities of the modern press and my own limitations. The three themes are the Technical (or Instructional), the Traditional (or Historical), and the Inspirational. Of course, they often combine in a particular text or workaday situation.

How I got to Cranium Press from that heady whirl of Berkeley activism, meeting poets and other printers, learning offset printing, and acquiring that first platen press – an 8 x 12 C&P which dear Tom Winnett stored in his office for a number of months – is a lot to sort out and included the first Cranium publication, set on a typewriter and printed on Tom's second press, an old Davidson offset. Led by a combination of youthful ignorance, daring, and a small loan from my poetry teacher, I opened that little shop in the Haight-Ashbury in the glorious spring weather at the beginning of the Summer of Love.

Help and encouragement came from folks like Marty, Roger Levenson, and the owner of the Professional Press on Durant in Berkeley, who gave me some tools, a type rack, and a broken piece of imposing stone. I made a list of names (those I could remember) of all the friends, apprentice/friends, contemporaries, and mentors who helped make that work so rewarding, but the list would take longer than we have time for here.

I won't indulge in all the stories of those magical days, of hard work and happy discoveries. I set out to accomplish the idea that I could do commercial printing to keep the shop thriving, and make books of poetry, too. (That was the plan for Auerhahn Press as well, but I didn't know that then.) Three events came together early on that significantly advanced the working library in all of the three areas I have outlined. First was the discovery in another type specimen booklet, this one from Amsterdam Continental, of Eric Gill's Perpetua.

Then, on another one of those fine spring days, into my shop walked George Fox, who at the time was a representative for the Wilson-Rich Paper Company, and he introduced me to Curtis and Fabriano papers. Paper samples, sample books, and price catalogues began to accumulate from that day forward, and along with all the type specimens, formed the workhorse core of the working library. Whatever spirit watches over the fortunes of us artisans of the book has created a special little spot for George Fox. But that's yet another story, and another long one, too. Expert on paper, bookbinder (he led my wife, Diane, to study with the great Peter Fahey), collector,

publisher, and friend. My very first Cranium Press publication, after *Hollow Orange One*, was Peter Wild's *Sonnets*, hand set in Perpetua and printed on Curtis Rag. George also turned me on to the Cardoza-James Bindery, and even more importantly, to the typesetter Jim Brooke, sharing a shop on Natoma Street with none other than Graham Mackintosh. Jim's library of Linotype faces, especially his Aldus and his Janson, was to become our major working collection at Cranium. Well, and of course, Mackenzie & Harris and that gallery of wonderful people there who were an endless source of support and encouragement.

The third discovery of those earliest days, both technical and inspirational, was Philip Whalen's *Memoirs of an Interglacial Age*, and Dave Haselwood of Auerhahn Press. This was also my introduction to Phil's poetry, and ultimately, to Phil himself. But it was not until many years later that I was able to make a book reflecting his sense of the calligraphic poem on the page: *Some Of These Days*, printed at Deer Creek in 1999. I had begun work on Max Finstein's *There's Always a Moon in America*, and I found myself going back and forth between Phil's book and all the problems I was having designing and printing an edition far more complicated than anything I had previously attempted, looking for answers and suggestions, *to see how it was done*. Here is the section of the library we probably treasure most: those books we want to have around, to go back to again and again, not only to see how Haselwood, or Wilson, or Mackintosh (or whoever your own fond mentors are) solved a particular design or technical problem, but also to keep raising the level of our aspirations.

Now here is a story about ink, one with another vast gallery of characters in it. One of the first book printing jobs I did for a client was the reprint of Richard Brautigan's *Galilee Hitch-Hiker* for David Sandberg's Or publications. By this time it had become obvious that I was going to need a financial boost, and that I needed to learn more. Brautigan suggested, then insisted, that I call Peter Bailey at East Wind Printers. I already knew East Wind's reputation as one of the premier design and printing houses in San Francisco, so it was with great trepidation that I called him, he invited me to come in, and then, by golly, he hired me. This remarkable apprenticeship with Peter also led to training on the Heidelberg windmill with Hong Lee, who ran that press along with the smaller offsets. Hong was a genius with color, and the shelves above his workbench were filled with little paper cups containing mixed colored inks from previous jobs. Whenever a repeat job came in, he could match the color exactly, not with any Pantone system, but with his long training and a clear eye. The ink in the working library is the ink, and I never met any two printers who agreed on what to use, how to modify it, or how to mix colors. While different combinations of paper and type may demand variations in the ink, once a printer has found his or her solution to this pesky stuff, it becomes a mainstay and resistant to change. I clung to the system I learned from Adrian until Dan Smith began making his truly fine inks many years later. The most compelling discussion of inks I have seen is in *Printing as a Performing Art*, in which Ed Grabhorn and Lawton Kennedy express their contrasting ideas about how ink ought to work.

This brings me to Adrian Wilson and *The Design of Books*. One day in 1967, Diane and I had lunch with Lew Welch at the No Name Bar in Sausalito. After lunch we stopped in at the Tides Bookstore, right nearby, where I came upon Adrian's book, very newly published. Well, I gobbled this one up, as I had done *Books and Printing* before it, and the conviction grew stronger and stronger that what I really needed to do was study with him.

Here the Working Library takes on a much expanded role and presence. When I went to work for Adrian in 1968, he was recovering from heart surgery, and he and his wife, Joyce, were rebuilding their Tuscany Alley home and studio after a fire. Aside from helping get the studio back together, a good learning experience in itself, I worked on the Book Club's publication of *The Book Called Holinshed's Chronicles* all the way through, from pasting italics into the dummy to sorting sheets at the Schuberth Bindery, not to mention a rigorous introduction to the Colt's Armory press. But what is important to this discussion, beyond the value of an apprenticeship like that, if one can be found, was the access I had to Adrian's own working library. There I was able to spend time with his *Printing for Theater*, Jack Stauffacher's *Janson*, and an original edition of Zapf's *Manuale*, among others, as well as the many books Adrian had designed and printed. A couple of chapbooks he had done were perfect models for so much of the Cranium work that was to come, and his printing of Weldon Kees's *Poems*, set in Caslon 471, set off an ongoing discussion of the merits of the many different and the many bad Caslons (he didn't like the short descenders on my precious 540). My copy of the Kees book also became one of those reference treasures.

The Holinshed was set in Bruce Rogers's Centaur, a typeface Adrian liked a lot and knew how to work with, and I became fascinated with it as well. Centaur is one of those types that presents some fundamental challenges. Many printers avoid it altogether, understandably. But if you studied with Adrian Wilson, you couldn't. The specimen sheet of Centaur, from 1948, written by Robert Grabhorn, designed by Rogers, set and published by Mackenzie & Harris, and printed by Taylor and Taylor, is one of those library treasures we still have, hanging above my digital print shop. The challenge is to set a robust text in something so graceful (Bob Grabhorn said Centaur "just cannot lend itself to composition of the mean and cheap,") and if you don't get it just right, it looks terrible. I should know; I've done both.

All those days spent with Centaur led to wanting to know more about its origins, which led to digging into Updike's *Printing Types*, which led to a giant blowup of the original Jenson page shown there, hung next to the Centaur, which led to the discovery of the type by Erhard Ratdolt, which led to the specimen book of Goudy's Italian Old Style and the use of that typeface for many years to come.

Ed Grabhorn says in his essay that early type was the cheap substitute for handwriting. Calligraphy and the history of writing were a vital part of my education, as were the very talented calligraphy teachers who aided in deepening my understanding of letterforms. The primary source was Edward Johnston's quirky (1906 after all) *Writing & Illuminating & Lettering*. I studied directly with John C. Tarr, who

had studied with Edward Johnston, and he taught me and many others that foundational hand you can see mostly clearly in Gill Sans Light. Thomas Ingmire bridged the decades, from a deep understanding of traditions to a very modern, almost experimental approach, as many of you have seen. He taught me to cut quills! And of course Georgianna Greenwood taught us all.

I haven't yet talked about presses, because I don't really want to. You work with what you've got, which is never quite big enough, and it definitely determines the scope of the work. Again, there is a crisp debate in *Printing as a Performing Art* between Grabhorn and Kennedy on the merits of platen presses versus cylinder presses. Tools are another fascinating area of study, but I'm going to dodge that one. And I'm not going to devote much time here to bookbinding, although of course without that craft you don't have books. I have mentioned Cardoza-James and Schuberth binderies, and elsewhere I have said that any design for a book must start with the bindery. I mentioned that Diane studied bookbinding, and we had a bindery in the press, where she always had one project or another going on. Our primary source for bookbinding ideas was Pauline Johnson's *Creative Bookbinding*, and the binding of Gary Snyder's *Fudo Trilogy* was based on her text. The Updike of bookbinding is Edith Diehl's *Bookbinding: Its Background and Technique*, but in those days we weren't able to get our hands on a copy.

The other element to learn about of course is paper, and I have mentioned learning about Curtis Rag. A joke got started at Tuscany Alley that then percolated down through various shops: "It's all about the paper! No! It's all about the type!" Dard Hunter's *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft* is to paper what Updike's *Printing Types* is to typography: the more serious one gets about this work, the more important it is to have these books around. And at the end of Chapter Two of his book, Hunter describes the differences between Oriental and European paper, and explains the invention of the printing press and why we print the way we do. I've put a lot of thought into those few paragraphs over the years, and I still do.

Howie and Kathryn Clark began experimenting with paper making in the early '70s, and I hope it's not overly boastful to say that one of their sources was Dard Hunter's book, which they borrowed from Cranium Press. Howie figured out how to design and build an original Hollander beater, which they wore to pieces in their early work.

I hope this demonstrates the community I've been trying to illustrate: at the First San Francisco International Book Fair in 1971, the Clarks had that beater running and were forming paper, while I was printing a keepsake on those fresh damp leaves on the little borrowed Albion that is now at the San Francisco Public Library, a gift of Margaretta Mitchell.

San Francisco Main Public Library is where the vast bulk of what I'd call the Inspirational Working Library is housed. How else could I have looked at the original Jenson type? Or the Grabhorn *Leaves of Grass*, or the scores of other paragons that inspire and inform our work, that you or I may never own. The Robert Grabhorn

Collection on the History of Printing is the most valuable resource I know for exploring the traditions and finding inspiration. Alastair Johnston has written an excellent introduction to the Grabhorn Collection, found on the Special Collection's website. There's even a movie! For that matter, if you want to go look at inspiring and instructive examples of beautiful printing, start at the Book Club itself. The Book Club's publications over the years have been printed by the finest artisans in California, and the focus on California history allows one to look at stylistic evolution and different approaches to similar material. And what a beautiful place to work!

The years of Cranium were probably unique, if only because the times were unique. But I know and I can tell you that the community I had the great privilege to be a part of lives on, as does the library of books preserved and shared, and the technical and traditional and inspirational made readily available by everybody who loves books and their making, wherever you can hear that grumpy rhythmic clanking of the platen press, or the weird gripper cylinder gear roller noise of a Vandercook.

★

The letterpress shop has moved on to a new home now, one in the new generation of artisans of the book, and the sensory field of the shop has certainly changed. The rhythmic sound of the inkjet printer invariably calls up some idiotic two- or three-word phrase that then bores monotonously into the mind that is trying to pay attention to the subdued clicking of the keyboard. That wonderful ink, type wash, and dusty lead smell is gone. Occasionally the paper smell comes through, since aside from "mouse work," most of the activity is handling paper: cutting, folding, stitching. In the early days of our digital age, a colleague who had also been a printer said she kept trying to stick her hand into the screen to move the type around.

What do I miss most? I don't miss the heavy forms or the strenuous repetitive motions. But I miss getting the impression right, getting the ink right, the back-up, square on the page. I even miss the boredom; I learned so much about poetry that way, poems going by in pieces, altered by imposition. I can bring my understanding of that work and of typography in metal to the ongoing challenge of good taste and balance, of appropriate type selections, of bringing spirit and energy and visual excitement to a book of poems – but I can't feel it, the mind, the hands, the body, all the senses fully focused on the perfection of this craft.

Southern California Sightings

CAROLEE CAMPBELL

In the opening preface of the first volume of the 1677 edition of *Mechanick Exercises: Or, The Doctrine of Handy-works*, author and printer Joseph Moxon noted, “handy-craft signifies cunning or sleight, or craft of the hand, which cannot be taught by Words, but is only gain’d by Practice and exercise.” It was those words that introduced the estimable program for the American Printing History Association’s 41st Annual Conference held at the equally estimable Huntington Library in San Marino, California on 7-9 October 2016, the title of which was *The Black Art & Printers’ Devils: The Magic, Mysticism, and Wonders of Printing History*. A post card disseminated earlier in the year announcing the conference included an image from the Huntington’s Rare Book Collection entitled *A rich cabinet, with variety of inventions: unlock’d and open’d, for the recreation of ingenious spirits at their vacant hours* by John White (-1671) printed in London for William Whitwood, 1668. (Huntington RB 382019, if you care to see the volume in person and you have the scholar’s stamp of approval to be allowed access). It shows an appropriately dressed man for the 1660s sitting at a table with a candle burning, and pulling a deck of cards out of the hat which is on his head. Sleight of hand, indeed.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the American Printing History Association (APHA), it was founded in 1974 as a membership organization that encourages the study of the history of printing and related arts and crafts, including calligraphy, typefounding, typography, papermaking, bookbinding, illustration, and publishing. In this way it very much echoes the interests of many of the members of the Book Club of California. APHA is effective through a wide variety of programs and services: an annual conference and J. Ben Lieberman Lecture series; an oral history project; a fellowship program; the scholarly journal *Printing History* and other special publications; and annual individual and institutional awards that honor distinguished achievement in the field of printing history. In a final paean to APHA, it is an international organization with members all over the world. The parent organization is supported by regional chapters that sponsor programs of lectures, field trips, and other opportunities to meet fellow APHA members on an informal basis.

It was APHA’s regional chapter, the Southern California Chapter, that jumped into the fray by forming a conference planning committee that met regularly for nearly a year at the Huntington Library to make decisions and sort it all out. That is an essay in itself.

At the heart of each APHA conference is the call for papers based on the conference theme for that year. All else branches out from there. As the branches grew and matured, nourished by each successive meeting, the plans became a solidly rooted tree.

The papers were selected. A logo was designed. Food choices considered for a range of diets: vegan, gluten-free, lacto-vegetarian, meat-eaters, wine bibbers, and alcohol-free drinkers alike. Snacks, mid-afternoon pick-me-ups, reception fare. Napkins. Table cloths. Stand up. Sit down.

Hotel choices with blocks of rooms to put aside. Shuttle busses to hire. Lists of local restaurants to assemble. Optional tours to plan. A book fair to organize. A book bag to select and have silkscreened with conference logo and bag donor's name. A crew to silkscreen same. Another crew to hand sew the twenty-three-page program into a hand painted, letterpress printed cover in an edition of 200 copies. No—no staples.

Then to the program design itself. How to design it for visual clarity and readability, and pack in so much information above and beyond the schedule.

Back to the logo, which was a brilliant stroke, designed by APHA SoCal committee member, Barbara Hauser, who also designed the entire program.

Guessing the meaning of the logo turned into the idea to have a conference contest with the winner required to describe the meaning with the most detail. (Here I might suggest a contest for BCC members to do the same. The answer will be revealed in the next *Quarterly*. No cheating.)

When the call for papers went out, it was the first time that *Printing History* was considered based on a specific subject rather than its own historiography. Subgenres were considered: magic, mysticism, the occult, alchemy, optical illusions, trickery. Subjects that would be entertained included: emblem books, hidden fore-edge printing, unexplained phenomena, ink formulas, metallurgy for type, printed proof of spirit communications, history of witchcraft, books of spells, conjuring books.

The results from the call created a constellation of papers from: *The Magical and Mysterious Faces of Ouija: The Aesthetic History of the Ouija Board*; *Blood Book: The Magic of Henry Cornelius Agrippa's De occulta*; and *The Alchemy of Erasure: Book Waste as Evidence*; to *Secret Engraving Marks and Other Mysterious Printing on Postage Stamps*; and *Making the Invisible Visible: Wartime Wonders at the U.S. Government Printing Office*.

The first day of the conference included a book fair with thirty-four exhibitors ranging from fine press publishers to book dealers to institutions and organizations. Nearly a third of the exhibitors were BCC members: Mark Barbour (International Printing Museum); Norman Clayton (Classic Letterpress); Michael Dawson (Dawson's Gallery & Book Shop); Sharon Gee (PBA Galleries); Jean Gillingwators (Blackbird Press); Peter Koch (for both the Codex Foundation and Peter Koch Printers); Harry and Sandra Reese (Turkey Press); Blake Riley standing in for Andrew Hoyem (Arion Press); Peter and Donna Thomas; Richard Wagener (Mixolydian Press); Kathy Walkup (Mills College Book Art Program); and this reporter, (Ninja Press).

I dare not fail to mention the keynote speaker for the conference, the preeminent sleight-of-hand artist, Ricky Jay, who was in conversation with recently retired Avery Chief Curator of Rare Books at the Huntington Library, Alan Jutzi. The keynote



from *Musaeum Hermeticum* Matthäus Merian the Elder, engraver, Frankfurt 1678

address entitled *Collecting the Enigmatic*, began with a fulsome fifteen-minute introduction given by Mr. Jutzi of Mr. Jay, the world renowned illusionist, scholar, historian, and actor. (Look up the 2012 PBS documentary, *Deceptive Practice: The Mysteries and Mentors of Ricky Jay*. That done, go to your old stack of *New Yorkers* for 2016 and read Peter Schjeldahl's review, *Seeing Is Believing* [*The Art World*, January 25]; a review of the Metropolitan Museum's exhibition, *Wordplay: Matthias Buchinger's Drawings from the Collection of Ricky Jay*. Having done both those things, you will want to read *Matthias Buchinger: The Greatest German Living* by Ricky Jay, perhaps followed by any number of Mr. Jay's other books: *Learned Pigs & Fireproof Women*; *Conjuring Literature in America*; and *Jay's Journal of Anomalies* which was originally published in a letterpress-printed edition by our own Patrick Reagh from 1994 to 1998.)

Ricky Jay's charm and eloquence were much in evidence. Having seen his stage performance, *Ricky Jay and His 52 Assistants* in a small theatre in Los Angeles some years ago, I made certain to be in the front row of Rothenberg Hall at the Huntington for the Keynote. I thought surely he would pull out a deck of cards at some point in the conversation but, alas, it was not to be. However, take a look at his performance on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jljt5Ml28FU. You may also be interested in his filmography which includes *Heist*, written and directed by David Mamet.

The conference ended with a Plenary session. Three presenters, all from the Getty Research Institute (GRI) in Los Angeles, discussed the exhibition that had yet to open at the GRI, *The Art of Alchemy*. They showed slides of some of the astonishing manuscripts to be on display. It was mouth-watering for anyone with even a smattering of knowledge of the history of alchemy. David Brafman, Associate Curator of Rare Books, spoke exhaustively on some of the highlights drawn from GRI Special Collections for this exhibition. With rapid fire he charted a path through the history of alchemy from its golden age in the late 16th and 17th centuries, through the years of Enlightenment and revolution, and into the modern period.

Rhiannon Knol, research assistant in the GRI curatorial department, reviewed several centuries of alchemical books and manuscripts that, by studying and identifying their marks, were discovered to be owned and annotated by women.

GRI Chief Curator and Associate Director for Special Collections and Exhibitions, Marcia Reed, focused on more recent books in the Getty collection, particularly those whose themes and structures are drawn from alchemical subjects, substances, and symbols.

Among the several tours that were planned for the conference attendees, the hot-test ticket was for a tour of the aforementioned but yet to open *Art of Alchemy* exhibition at the Getty. The group was privileged to have a walk-through of the exhibition led by curator David Brafman, who gave us breathless, near encyclopedic accounts of the origin and meaning of some of the works on display. Meanwhile, in another gallery, Marcia Reed showed the contemporary books we had seen in slide form during the APHA Plenary. In most cases, we were able to leaf through the books ourselves, the exceptions being a unique painted photo book by artist Anselm Kiefer from 1996, *Die berühmten Orden der Nacht*, and Peter Koch's 2015 *Liber Ignis*, printed on lead. Peter was on the tour, enabling the group to hear about the work from the artist himself. A copy of the Ninja Press book, *The Persephones*, was chosen for display as well. Your reporter was there and available to discuss the making of it.

The *Art of Alchemy* exhibition runs from 11 October 2016 to 12 February 2017 at the Getty Research Institute. The exhibition deserves much more attention in this column, which it will get in the next issue of the *Quarterly*. Stay tuned for that and for the answer to the APHA Conference Logo Challenge. It would be amusing if BCC members would write the *Quarterly* editor with your own answers. The one with the most additional details about the logo will receive a handsomely letterpress-printed prize.



Delights and Dilemmas of Private Collectors and Librarians: Excerpts from an Experts' Panel

BY ANNE W. SMITH

Book collectors, sellers, artists, and their colleagues from around the world will be gathering this February for the Antiquarian Book Fair and the Codex Symposium and International Book Fair. For context, edification, and encouragement, the *Quarterly* provides an edited summary of remarks from the Book Club of California's collectors symposium, presented with support from Bonhams as a part of the 2016 FABS tour and moderated by Randy Tarpey-Schwed. The complete presentation may be seen on BCC's YouTube Channel.

GARY KURUTZ ON THE ZAMORANO EIGHTY

One of the great pinnacles of this field is collecting the Zamorano Eighty, the Mount Everest of book collecting in California history. The Eighty may not be the rarest books, but they are perhaps the most distinguished, and considered the finest work ever created by a committee. The selection of works had great influence not only on California book collecting, but also Western Americana book collecting, an example of California's influence beyond its borders. Today, collecting all eighty books is an unachievable goal. The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University is the only institution in the world to have a complete collection in first edition of the Zamorano Eighty.

As a librarian, I had the pleasure of working with all kinds of sellers and collectors, one of them being Henry Clifford in Los Angeles. After Clifford died, his books were prepared for auction, and at the time I was working on *California Gold Rush: A Descriptive Bibliography*. I was eager to see Clifford's collection. I visited Pasadena, and when I finally saw the Zamorano Eighty lined up on a shelf in a linen closet, I thought, "I've arrived."

Over the years, there has been a discussion as to whether to update the Zamorano Eighty. Some say that it is an artificial list; how can you distill all books on California history to eighty? Nonetheless, many people consider it to be an important collection for bibliophiles and historians. Even today, people will ask, what books do you recommend on California history? The Zamorano Eighty is a good place to start.

Gary Kurutz is an author and principal librarian emeritus of the Special Collections Branch of the California State Library in Sacramento. He served as president of the Book Club of California and chair of its publications committee.

 BUYING AND SELLING OLD BOOKS, BY KEN KARMIOLE

My remarks are based on being an active California rare book dealer. I opened up a store on Westwood Boulevard in Los Angeles in 1976 and I can assure you that my rare book business is alive and well today. Being in business for this length of time has cumulative benefits. I now know many of the private collectors, those in the antiquarian book trade, as well as the libraries and librarians that are active in building rare book and special collections. I sit on a very comfortable perch, and I don't think it would be quite as comfortable for someone just starting out as a rare book dealer today.

The rare book business revolves around two basic activities, buying and selling. I begin with a profound book truth that I have learned over the years: "Selling a book is easy, if you buy the right book, at the right price." There are three categories of buyers, institutional (the libraries), private collectors, and dealers, and all are alive and well in California.

There are collectors at every income level, and I see new faces every year that start to form serious collections, spending serious money. My business is quite active in selling to the trade. I'm a generalist, with a strong emphasis on books printed before 1800. The truth is, I'll buy anything that I think I can sell for a profit! I enjoy selling the right book to the right collector, library, or dealer. It is one of the pleasures of this business.

Here is another profound book truth: "You have to buy a book, before you can sell a book," and buying books is definitely my biggest business challenge today. Twenty-five years ago there was a used or rare book shop in almost every small city in the United States, and dozens in large cities. No more. In addition to the loss of so many stores, we must also deal with new realities brought about by the Internet, such as book pricing. My accumulated book knowledge, knowledge that used to make me money because I knew something that another dealer didn't know, is now shared with the world. I still enjoy the rare books business very much, although it isn't quite as fun as it was twenty-five years ago, I'm sorry to say.

Ken Karmiole has been an antiquarian bookseller for over forty years, establishing his business in 1976. Ken is a member of the Zamorano Club, Roxburghe Club, and Grolier Club, and currently serves as a director of the Book Club of California.

 A COLLECTING PERSPECTIVE BY ANDREW NADEL

I am a collector of books on professions. I started in the 1970s collecting books about medical doctors. In the 1990s, I expanded the subject to all learned and skilled occupations. I hunt for manuscripts and printed books on this subject in the Medieval, renaissance, and early modern periods. With my wife, Eleanore Ramsey, I have also formed a collection on the architecture and art of the nineteenth century Gothic Revival.

As I started collecting early books while a student in England, I always bought from booksellers there. When I came to California, I also searched in second-hand and antiquarian bookshops all over the state. The number of such bookshops has been decimated in the twenty-first century.

The great pleasure in the hunt that is book collecting is choosing the prey. With all due respect to my esteemed colleague and friend, Gary Kurutz, collecting by lists is not for me. But the use of dozens of bibliographies, some every day, is essential to success in collecting.

Bibliomania is clearly a cluster of behaviors but it is not a disease. Moreover, it is pleasurable and does no harm to others. Auction bidding, especially in person or by telephone, allows the full expression of bibliomania: the hunt, the battle, the capture, the showing of the prize.

Andrew Nadell left Duke University after four years with three degrees: doctor of medicine from Duke University, master of science in sociology from University of London, and budding book collector advised by professor of medical bibliography, G.S.T. Cavanagh. He is the United States national delegate to the International Society for the History of Medicine, and a member of the Grolier Club and the Book Club of California.

OBSESSION AND COMPLETION BY DAVID LEVY

I will share the dilemma that I face as a collector and share a few delights along the way. Family and career put my serious games playing on hold. But books were a substitute that offered much more time flexibility, and I was led inevitably to the writings of Edmond Hoyle. His first book, *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist*, was published in 1742 and it is the first book ever written about the strategy of card play. I acquired this rarity more than ten years ago, but there was an earlier acquisition that foreshadowed my obsession with Hoyle.

In the early 1990s, a specialist dealer wrote from London offering six different 18th century editions of Hoyle, and I bought all six. This arts and crafts bookcase houses my Hoyle collection—some 200 copies of Hoyle from 1742 to the mid-19th century. Let's say that my collection is substantially complete. Until the past few years, I was able to add a dozen or more Hoyles to my collection each year. 2015 brought only seven additions, two of which were condition upgrades. So far in 2016, I've added only two Hoyles. So I'm not finding many books to buy. Am I still a collector if I'm not buying? A happy collector? And that's the dilemma—what does a collector do as the collection nears completion.

At an event here at the Book Club of California a few months ago, I described my dilemma to another member. What do I do when I can't find any more books? He answered, "If you can't find books in your field, it's because you don't know your field well enough." That reply was provocative in both senses of the word. To use the first

definition, his comment “caused annoyance, anger, or another strong reaction.” He challenged my expertise, saying that I don’t know my field.

But after a moment, his comment “aroused interest,” the second definition. I thought back to the Hoyles I added to my collection only because my research had revealed their importance. So, I am a collector who is not finding much to buy. But there are always more libraries to visit, more to study, and more to write. And, as my friend suggests, perhaps more understanding will result in more purchases.

What is the resolution? I ask myself why I collect Hoyle so obsessively. Long ago with bridge or backgammon books, the “why” was easy—I wanted to get better at the games. But why buy the 10th Hoyle or the 20th or the 200th? The answer for me is scholarship. My goal is to have a reference collection of Hoyle for study and writing. That’s not what I set out to do, but it’s where I’ve ended up.

Indeed, I enrolled in a class in descriptive bibliography at the Rare Book School in Charlottesville. That class was a life changer. I am now working on a descriptive bibliography of editions of Hoyle, with nearly 200 book entries now online and before long, I hope to have them out in book form.

And recently I did buy something at a Sotheby’s auction—a 1651 on the game of Piquet, the first book in English on a card game. A real delight!

David Levy developed an interest in bibliographical scholarship after acquiring Edmond Hoyle’s A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist (1742). He has researched and written extensively on Hoyle, including on his blog, Edmond Hoyle, gent. He is a member of the Roxburghe Club and the Book Club of California.

CREATING A RARE BOOK SCHOOL BY SUSAN M. ALLEN

In the late 1990s, special collections librarians from the Los Angeles area banded together to present their rare book and manuscript collections in a museum style exhibition from December 2001 through January 2002 at the Hammer Museum in West Los Angeles. Once the exhibition was over, the librarians, who had grown fond of meeting with one another, looked for a new collaborative project. They wondered what they could do next and began talking about a rare book school on the West Coast.

In 2004, at a meeting of special collections librarians from libraries all over Southern California, these stakeholders agreed to form an informal consortium to create a California Rare Book School. The school was to be modeled after the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia. The idea was to open the West Coast to this kind of study. Dr. Beverly P. Lynch who was on the faculty at UCLA served as the school’s founding director. The first courses were offered in 2006 with early support provided by the Ahmanson Foundation, the Book Club of California, UCLA, and the Getty Trust.

Who attends CalRBS? All ages, all demographics, librarians, collectors, booksellers, scholars, and graduate students. Participants come from across the country and

from abroad. Participants who have gone to RBS at Virginia now come to CalRBS, and vice versa. Attendance seems driven by particular course offerings, and geography plays a lesser role. CalRBS has always sought to offer courses that exploit the collections found in California institutions. For example Gary Kurutz, fellow panelist has frequently taught "History of the Book in the West with the Emphasis on California."

So what are the delights of CalRBS? The most supreme delight is taking a course! Another delight for collectors who participate is that CalRBS courses address some of their dilemmas. "Donors and Libraries" examines final disposition of collections. The various history of the book courses will help collectors think the broader picture of cultural history. Taking "Descriptive Bibliography" educates about the physical nature of collections.

Another dilemma for CalRBS is the barriers to participation that exist. These barriers are cost, time, and distance. CalRBS's solution to the financial barrier is to offer as many scholarships as possible. Yet, there are never enough. CalRBS has held annual fund drives for three years now to raise support for tuition scholarships. And, we would love to see many more of them participate. However, we have difficulty reaching collectors. Perhaps "crowd sourcing" could provide ideas for how to tap into this audience?

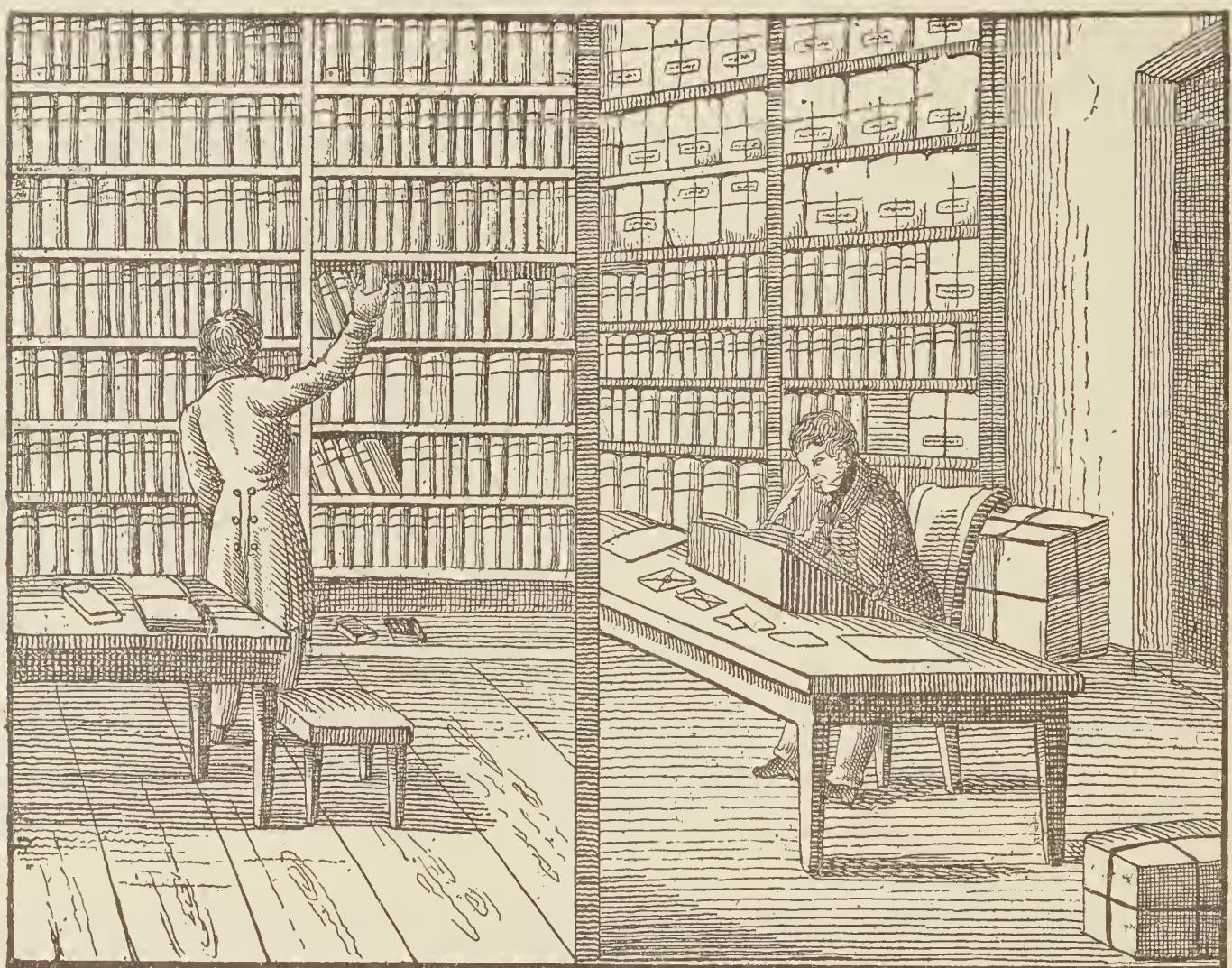
Susan M. Allen is director of California Rare Book School. She serves as treasurer of the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles and teaches regularly at the California Rare Book School.

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Book Reviews

EDWARD EBERSTADT & SONS: RARE BOOKSELLERS OF WESTERN AMERICANA.
by Michael Vinson. Norman, Oklahoma: The Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint
of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. \$29.95, cloth.

A REVIEW BY GARY F. KURUTZ

Past President of the Book Club of California and Curator Emeritus, California State Library.

Edward Eberstadt & Sons certainly stand out as one of the most important antiquarian booksellers in the field of Western Americana. Their dominance in the twentieth century is brilliantly chronicled by Michael Vinson, himself an antiquarian bookseller with a specialization in Western Americana. In this day and age of digitization and social networking, it is refreshing to read Vinson's well-told narrative documenting this legendary firm. Vinson traces the history of this storied rare book company from its beginnings in 1908 to its gradual dissolution in the 1970s. Born in 1883, Edward Eberstadt worked in gold mining before accidentally discovering a stack of old books in

a Brooklyn garage and thus began his interest and passion for rare books. He started out by selling “Modern, Rare and Antique” books from Latin America and then turned to books about the West under the name of the Hudson Book Company. From his shop in downtown New York City and now under the name of Edward Eberstadt, he saw the business through the prosperous 1920s, and when the Great Depression hit, recruited his two sons, Charles and Lindley, to work in the shop. Charles turned out to be an expert cataloger while his brother developed into a natural salesman and traveling book scout. The family business survived the 1930s and flourished during the post-war years. All the while father and sons cultivated private and institutional collectors. When the great man died in 1965, his sons kept Eberstadt & Sons thriving for another decade. Their legacy lives on through their superb catalogs and the institutional collections they helped build.

What adds so much to the importance of Vinson’s book is that virtually every major collector, library, and dealer in the field of Western Americana interacted with the Eberstadts. Vinson skillfully records what a tremendous contribution the firm made in documenting the Western movement. Several of their clients, after experiencing the thrill of purchasing seminal titles and developing substantial private libraries, gave their biblio-treasures to such prestigious institutions as the Beinecke Library, Yale University; Princeton University Library; the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; the DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University; Newberry Library, Chicago; and the Huntington Library in southern California. The best example narrated by Vinson of a prime Eberstadt customer is that of William Robertson Coe of Oyster Bay, New York. Vinson wrote, “In 1909 Coe purchased Buffalo Bill’s Irma Ranch in Cody, Wyoming, as a hunting retreat. Here he met the Wyoming book collector Rev. Nathaniel Thomas and first developed an interest in collecting rare western books.” Thomas, however, was becoming “worn thin in the quest” for rarities and suggested that Coe contact Eberstadt to help satisfy his new collecting passion and thus began a three-decades-long relationship. Had it not been for Thomas introducing Coe to the senior Eberstadt, the famous Coe Collection of Western Americana at Yale’s Beinecke Library would never have come to be. Vinson also provides absorbing profiles of many other noteworthy collectors including Thomas Winthrop Streeter, Frederick Beinecke, C. Templeton Crocker, Philip A. Rollins, Edward D. Graff, and Henry R. Wagner. Stories of their triumphs and frustrations abound. Tantalizing accounts of the Eberstadt’s competing against other dealers like Glen Dawson, Peter Decker, Warren Howell and Michael Walsh of Goodspeed’s Bookshop abound. In addition, he covers how the Eberstadts interacted with institutions represented by such highly esteemed scholars like Archibald Hanna, the Western Americana Curator at Yale’s Beinecke Library. All of this is so artfully woven together that the book becomes the *vade mecum* of the Western Americana trade.

As Vinson humorously points out, booksellers and their customers thrive on gossip and love to exchange stories about how one dealer beat out another at an auction or to hear about a new collector who dared enter their field of interest. As the trade

sometimes termed it, “the collecting game” had a competitive edge and “gossip seems to be a form of oxygen needed for survival.” Naturally dealers competed against each other for titles and customers, and occasionally, let loose a stream of invective directed toward their rival or at an indecisive client. The literature of bookselling is filled with backroom chatter and Vinson brings this out better than any other author who has a Western focus. Not surprisingly, a bookseller like Eberstadt enjoyed socializing with his customers either at his shop or at a nearby bar quaffing cocktails. Such convivial occasions enabled shrewd dealers a chance to further understand their client’s passion for books and to enhance their own knowledge of the field. Of course, they would also learn what the competition was up to or hear about another collector be it an individual or an institution that decided to focus on the West. Dealers sometimes became white hot with jealousy when one of their customers dared buy books or a collection from a rival.

Vinson weaves into his text stories about the actual books that their clients and rival dealers lusted after such as the 1854 first edition of John Rollin Ridge’s *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit* (the rarest of The Zamorano 80 titles); Johnson and Winter’s *Route Across the Rocky Mountains* (1846); the magnificent hand-colored lithographs in Henry J. Ware’s *Sketches in North America and the Oregon Territory* (1848); *Guide to the Colorado Mines* (1863), and William Hamilton and Samuel Irvin’s *An Ioway Grammar* (1848). Discussion of rarity and physical condition are topics that often dominated the dialogue between dealer and collector. Edward Eberstadt, in educating a client tactfully explained why having a rare and important pamphlet-size title without its original printed wrappers was critical, stating that “It is a cripple and an annoyance—a Lillian Russell sans teeth.” Infused with the passion of an evangelist, he loved preaching about his subject specialization. In answering the *New York Times* Book Review reporter Lewis Nichols’s question concerning the magnetism of these books for wealthy Eastern U.S. collectors, Eberstadt explained: “There is more fine Western Americana in the East than anywhere else. People want something different—not the skyscrapers they see all around them, but shooting, cowboys, landscape. The West is less than 100 years old, and . . . only in the last fifty have we begun to appreciate Western history.”

Antiquarian bookselling, as brought out in this handsome Arthur H. Clark publication, is an art and the dealer not only has to become expert in his or her chosen field of specialization but also adept in pricing a book or a collection. Every collector or librarian scowls or lets out a deep sigh of frustration when seeing a sought-after title with an out-of-reach price in a catalog and rejoices when a bargain is spotted and snapped up. For example, the great Americana collector T. W. Streeter defended Eberstadt’s prices to the well-known collector and bibliographer Henry R. Wagner, writing: “I know that he does rob me from time to time, but he does it so gracefully and nicely that I don’t mind very much.” Collector Philip Rollin enjoyed poking a little fun at the Eberstadts following a recent collecting trip, “Stock up your wagon with nothing but cash, for the dealers resent your wasting any money on food.”

In addition to building great private and institutional collections, the Eberstadts further immortalized themselves with their sales catalogs. The scholarship they displayed in physically describing a book or pamphlet coupled with a succinct statement about the significance of that title will always be of great value to the collector, librarian, curator, and bookseller. Every serious collector of Western Americana cherishes their Eberstadt catalogs either as general catalogs or those with a specific theme like the Pacific Northwest or the Yosemite Valley. The fact that a four-volume reprint of their catalogs was published in 1965 serves as strong proof of the scholarship that permeates their work. Even today, collectors and librarians wishing to know about a particular title will turn to these catalogs.

Vinson complements his text with scores of footnotes that will further serve as an invaluable guide to any researcher wishing to gain insight into the world of antiquarian bookselling. His ample footnotes and bibliography attest to the immense resources he surveyed in creating this compelling business history. In so doing, he made use of such rich holdings as the Eberstadt Papers at the Beinecke Library, Yale University; the T. W. Streeter Papers at the American Antiquarian Society; the Philip Ashton Rollins Collection at Princeton University Library; Edward D. Graff Papers at the Newberry Library, and the Everette L. DeGolyer Papers at the DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University. These archival sources are further supported by a bibliography of choice books and articles.

Edward Eberstadt & Sons is further enhanced by an incisive foreword by William Reese, the dean of Americana antiquarian booksellers. Michael Vinson, he wrote, "has dug beneath the surface and revealed something of the hidden history of the book trade." By the way, this gracious New Haven dealer, in many respects follows in the footsteps of the Eberstadts by producing attractive hard copy catalogs loaded with bibliographic gold. Each is a work of permanent value, not to be discarded.

In summary, Michael Vinson's fast-paced book is a must for anyone interested in Western Americana and it stands as the best book-length chronicle of antiquarian bookselling this reviewer has ever read.



HARD HIGH-COUNTRY POEMS, Ten poems by Michelagelo Buonarroti Simoni with an English translation by Robert Bringhurst [hand set in Vicenza type], and a drypoint portrait of Michelangelo by Joseph Goldyne

THE TYPOGRAPHIC LEGACY OF LUDOVICO DEGLI ARRIGHI, by Robert Bringhurst. Peter Koch Printer, Berkeley, 2015. Two volumes: \$900.

A REVIEW BY JUAN NICANOR PASCOE

Scholar/Printer, Taller Martín Pescador, Tacámbaro, Michoacán, México

Harry Duncan, printer (1916-1997), was often called a “Renaissance man,” but he was not a collector of books. Still, catalogues came from the sellers, and once he said, having looked through one of them: “The deal here is this Bodoni. When I was in Rome I could have bought stacks of Bodoni and Aldus for a song. But there was no reason to.” In the book cases scattered around his family house there were volumes to drive a bibliophile to rapture. First editions of verse (for Duncan’s passion was verse) from Frederick Goddard Tuckerman on up through the books of his authors from the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s, signed and dedicated. The Doves Press, The Cuala Press, the Officina Bodoni, all of the American Victor Hammer, much early Stauffacher, Everson and Wilson, Stone Wall and Windhover, The Banyan Press, The Allen Press, The Perishable Press (most of this given, not bought). He never referred to any of it, except once he took a battered slim brown volume off the shelf; it was Plato’s *Crito* in English translation, printed in 1926 for Frederic Warde by Hans Mardersteig in Montagnola; he showed a page and said: “This Vicenza is about as beautiful as type gets.”

Years later, I was up at Omaha on a Christmas visit to the Duncans, and he said: “You remember that Vicenza type?” Yeah. “Why don’t you try to find out where the mats are? Maybe we could get enough cast for both of us. It’d probably look just as good in Spanish as in English.” (It’d probably look better, I thought, but didn’t say.)

Back home, I wrote letters and finally, through the Museum of Modern Art, found they were at the Rochester Institute of Technology. By the mere name of the place, I sensed that printing and its artifacts had been sequestered by the engineer curators, taken out of the untrustworthy hands of the humanities, saved for history from the messy territory of the arts.

During another visit to Omaha, answering my query, Duncan told me that yes, the mats were at Rochester, but were considered a “proprietary typeface,” and that for legal reasons any use of them was out of the question. Essentially the matter ended there – except that later on The Dale Guild from New Jersey announced that Vicenza was in the making, soon to be issued. I told Harry, but by then he was retired, inflation had not been kind to his pension, and it seemed to be too late. Still, I wrote The Dale Guild and asked about six lower case accents and an ñ, so I could use it in Spanish, an easy enough request in the days of hand casting, because the accents and the tilde

could be affixed to existing punches, and the mats struck. I still thought the type could look more handsome in Spanish than in English (I observed, looking through the *Crito*, a problem with a word ending in y next to one beginning with f) or in Italian (there was no provision for the gg nor the zz). But nothing came of this; the foundry was sold and the new owners had commercial clients (as if any still existed) in mind.

Harry died, then Nancy died, and it was time to divide up their stuff. I was there, and helped the three kids with the books. A pile grew in the middle of the room: minor items none of them were thrilled to have. I found the *Crito* there, and, in humble honor, knowing that Duncan would have let it happen (knowing it was not in his style to outright give), I took my inheritance. On the inside cover in pencil, the price: \$3.00.

Now, a decade and a half later, the world of cast type and hand printing in more peril than ever before, this item arrives in the mail from the office of "Peter Koch, printer" in Berkeley: two volumes (slim volumes) which probably comprise the fullest possible and final homage to the Vicenza type and the cast of characters gathered about it: Arrighi and Michelangelo, Adrian Wilson's fonts of the type printed on Jack Stauffacher's Gietz platen press, both now at the office of Koch in lower Berkeley, a block and a half from an inlet of the Bay: the furthest edge of Western Civilization.

The first volume, ten of Michelangelo's latter poems, in both the sonnet and madrigal forms, in tightly metrical, sculpted, and rhymed Italian (set in Monotype Arrighi), and in looser and more conversational English translations by Robert Bringhurst (these set in the eccentric, beautiful, and worn fifty-year-old Vicenza type). I do not complain about the translations: attempts to fit Anglo-Saxon germanic English into the tight confines of romance language versification are bound to result in poetrastry. These versions are the comely and private verse constructions of an ageing master, and we are quite convinced that we hear him speak. They are more or less love poems, although in the end they are more about art, death, and about himself. He says:

It sometimes happens, working in hard stone,
that, setting out to make the image of another,
you make a sort of image of yourself.

poem 2

This book sets out to etch images of Arrighi and Michelangelo, and it ends up also portraying and representing Bringhurst, Koch and his skilled assistants, John DeMerritt, the binder, Stauffacher, Wilson, and, while we are at it, the whole illustrious tradition of San Francisco printers. It is also probably the swan song of the type. And as a superbly conceived and executed set, we already know that folks will be scrambling to own one in fifty years time.

The second volume comprises the most complete history possible of Ludovico degli Arrighi, his books, his Chancery Italic calligraphy, his possible friendship with

Michelangelo; and then the bitter story of Frederic and Beatrice Ward as stirred up by Stanley Morison; Hans Mardersteig (the first champion of Arrighi) and his son Martino, still pulling the press in Verona, Charles Plumet and Charles Malin (the punchcutters), Will and Sebastian Carter (the printers): and in the center of it all, the Vicenza type.

We learn that *Crito* was not its first use, nor the finest: this honor is bestowed upon the Officina Bodoni edition of Ovid's *Amores*, printed in 1932. (I go at once to abebooks.com to search for copies and find one, at four-thousand-and-something dollars: not for me.) I learn that the book was printed, untranslated, in Latin. Mardersteig had cases of the type, and saw for himself in what language it looked best; and we trust that his was the right choice.

There was a recasting in 1963, overseen by the Cambridge University Press. Fonts went to The Rampant Lions Press, to Joseph Blumenthal, Jackson Burke, Roger Levenson, Ray Nash, Roderick Stinehour, and Adrian Wilson (this is the type which descended to Peter Koch, and in which the ten Michelangelo poems are printed.)

Where was Harry Duncan in 1963? At the School of Journalism at the University of Iowa he had just printed the twelve copy edition of *The Ocean to Cynthia*, the auto-graph poems of Sir Walter Raleigh, with this comment in the Forward: "The type face is Arrighi, a version of the Chancery Cursive that Raleigh used." If only someone had told him about the planned recasting of Vicenza!

By then, though, he was in a rented hut in downtown Iowa City, recently married, starting up again after his mid-life collapse, printing Stephen Berg's *Bearing Weapons* on Tovil paper from Cloister Old Style type, specially cast with reduced caps, with his "new" Ostrander Seymour hand press (all of this paid for by the sale of the Wallace Stevens letters). Nobody thought of him. He was not, we discover, one of the in-crowd of the Anglo-American fine book world.

Just like Michelangelo, Duncan came to love the woman of his life after the loves and achievements of his brilliant youth. Both wrote poetry. The mixture of art and recognition did not create happiness for either of them. The look on the Michelangelo portrait we see in the tipped-in drypoint opposite the spare and appropriate type-set title page is of ravaged unhappiness. Cupid's dart should have made him bloom.

And with that perfect shot
he made the season green again.
But my relapse, from this late arrow
is worse than my first suffering.

poem 6

Both, the sculptor and the printer, were wiser about art than about love and the causes of their bitter depressions. With them it was as if the bliss of achieving a

creation they knew to be unsurpassed left them with nowhere to go except onto the next one, or down.

... art wins the match with nature; this I know
because I've proved it in "bella scultura".

Time and death cannot unmake what I have made.

poem 5

Michelangelo knew well the dimension of his talent. He did not strut this knowledge in public, he was not writing home, not showing-off: he was writing a poem which one person, his beloved, would read. He had witnessed the plasticity of the marble sculptures his hands had carved and he wished to understand how it happened:

– as I might do
with stone or a clean, white page. There's nothing
there – and then, by finding it, I learn
what I was looking for.

poem 1

Any activity which claims to exist within the realm of "art" works like this: any artist would be happy if his opus just appeared before him, resolved and resplendent, but alas, it must be discovered, or uncovered, through work, through time, through the anguish of only vaguely knowing how to proceed. Victor Hammer said something along the line of: "An artist will know what his work is like only when he has finished it." Michelangelo's mention of a "clean, white page," although he refers to writing, allows us to include the art of printing alongside his sculpture.

Typography was once spoken of as "the art which serves all the arts." True, the words came from typographers who naturally admired their own work, in spite of the fact that the rest of the world, particularly now that the human hand has been superceded by robotics, thinks of it, if at all, not as an art but as a quaint and moribund branch of industry. In our own defense, we can call up printed works which, although they may mostly rest on shelves and not hang on walls, were created organically, singularly, slowly from within (as opposed to cosmetic additions to the tried and true), and thus achieved grace, unity, coherence, individuality: a marriage of text and form: art.

The Michelangelo volume uses cast type for the title page and the poems, but polymer plates, composed with digital Arrighi, for the Translator's Preface and the colophon. The Bringhurst essay volume states in the colophon: "The type is a custom-made digital variant of foundry Monotype Arrighi, printed letterpress from polymer plates..." (There may be more to it, but I see it has slightly diminished Roman caps with the cursive lower case, as Arrighi himself might have done, and it looks fine—although for some reason, one of the lines in the second colophon has the normal modern inclined caps).

It seems to me that neither the Amalfi nor the Hahnemühle papers in either of the volumes were dampened before printing (doing so would have been kinder to the aged Vicenza). The impression, as well as the register, is well-nigh perfect throughout (I had never heard of a Gietz press, and so can say nothing about it; but it must be praiseworthy). Such flawless printing applied to dampened paper would have created the “slight sculptural halo or highlight,” the apotheosis of impressed metal type that Bruce Rogers praised. This is possibly nit-picking, or impossible: I understand that polymer begins to melt away after repeated hard pressing into dampened paper.

Still, it is curious that in a book of this brevity and import (and one which is about type), at this moment in history, with the reputation of the physical book under such sustained threat (and from Northern California! One hop, skip and a jump away from Silicon Valley, a few miles from the tombs of William Everson and Lewis Allen), the printer would not have had Michael Bixler (or M&H Type, right across the bridge) cast the entire text in type, reset it by hand, and print damp, even with a platen press.

The setting of texts by hand is akin to the chipping away of marble: it is slow, the compositor concentrates on exactitude and spacing: the mind enters a state which is akin to daydreaming, and allows for the collaboration of both spheres of the brain: possibly unleashing the “messy territory” of art. Digital composition is all reason, order, detail, the imposition of will: the rightful realm of the technological museums. Hand press printing from plates is a drawn out, uncreative, and dreary business. Most printers nowadays do it anyway: they are short on time, drying paper changes size, they love their Macs and new typefaces which will never be cast in metal can be used, the light-sensitive plates can be cooked at home (but not actually “made,” which may turn out to be a problem later on if the manufacturers find no reason to continue producing them). The resulting evenness of impression and inking can be quite similar to the real thing, or even better.

“Even better!” That is the clincher. The artsy argument of the fuddy-dud, leaning on the fame of his out-crowd precursor, dries up and is scattered by the winds of change. Michelangelo the poet is reborn and honored; Bringhurst lets the English language sing anew; in evenly paced and informed prose, he brings Arrighi to his rightful place in history; maybe he even paves the way for the Vicenza type to be recast. Peter Koch, the self-appointed but undisputed CEO of the Post-Millenial Book Arts Movement, makes it possible for these things to happen.

We do not know what is in store for the future of typography, of books, of poetry, of the planet; we do know, as did Michelangelo, what is in store for us. The same as befell he himself, and Ludovico degli Arrighi, Francesco Griffio, Antonio Blado, Aldo Manuzio, Frederic and Beatrice Warde, Morison, Mardersteig, Van Krimpen, Hammer, the Grabhorns, Wilson, Duncan and most everyone else we have ever heard of.

If I do continue living, turned to smoke and powder,
I'll live forever, hardened by the fire –
struck, you could say, by gold, and not by iron.

poem 10

POSTSCRIPTA

i. The two volumes open flat on the table and are bound in paper covered boards with the thinnest of gilt-stamped blue leather spines, protected by a chemise that fits with exactitude into a slipcase. The design on the covers are "derived from photographs of standing type-metal forms used to print the poems." The result is excellent for the volume about the type, but jarring for the Michelangelo, which is quite different on the inside and for which something less jazzy might have worked better.

ii. *Hard High-Country Poems* is a translation of the line: "in petra alpestra e dura" – hard alpine stone – it took me aback at first, because I hadn't yet read the poems, and it made me think, instead of Florence and Rome, of Montana and the Canadian Rockies, the hard high-country from whence Bringhurst and Koch went south to storm the citadel of the old order: and I easily imagine them on horseback, astride hand-made saddles, wearing good-looking hats of excellent manufacture, traversing the screes of chilly slopes, talking of Michelangelo, heading for an outcropping of promising marble, at the foot of which springeth a trout creek.

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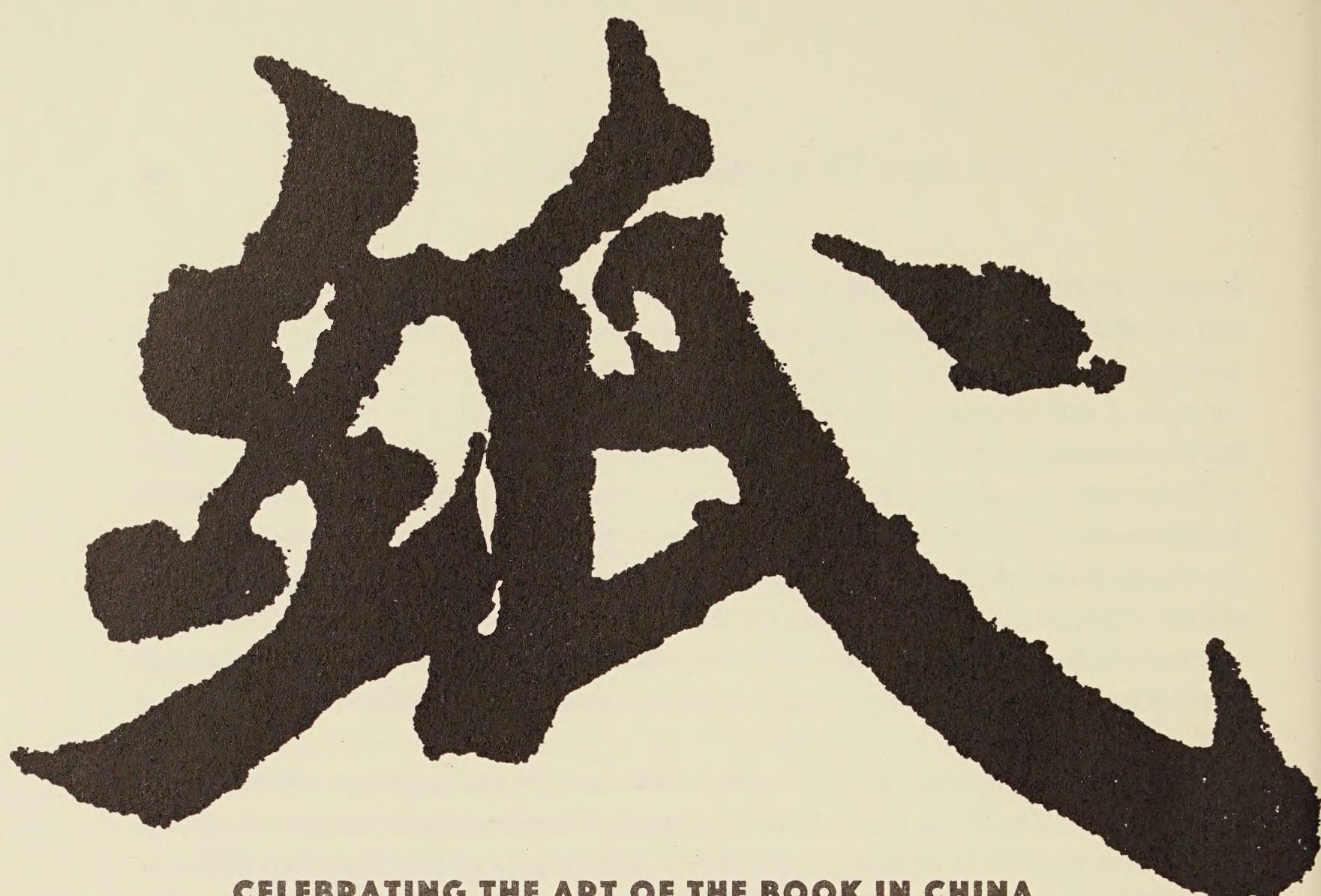
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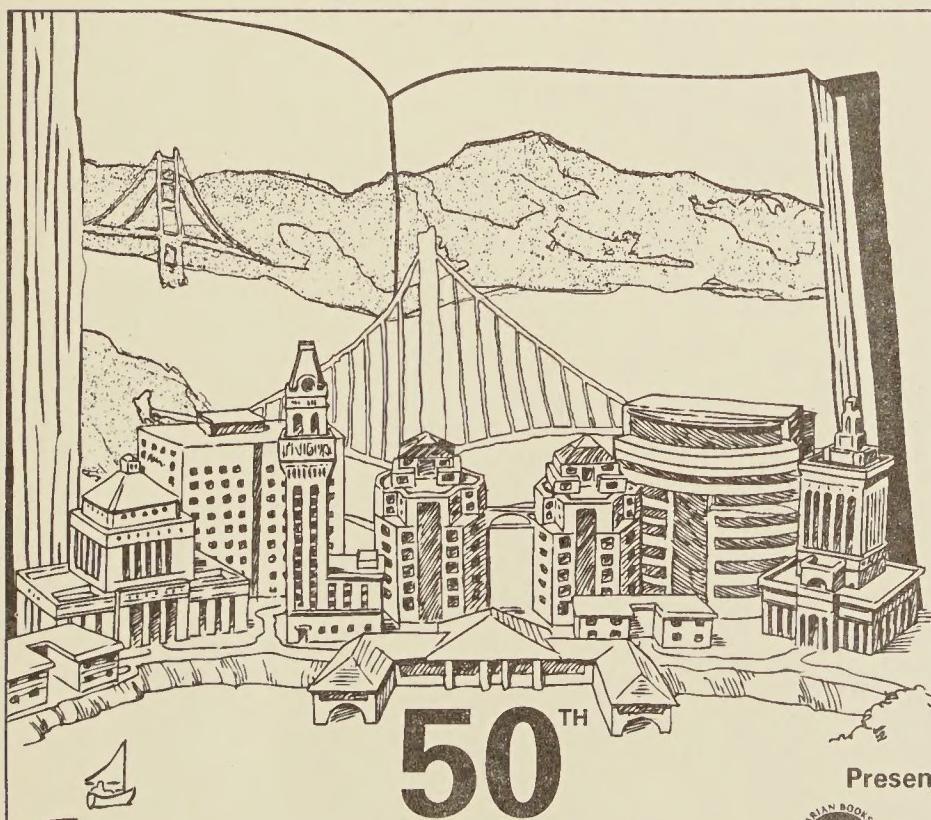
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